

Waltham Police Department

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES CHAPTER 22

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POLICY:

Members of the Waltham Police Department are entitled to benefits from many sources. In some cases benefits are regulated by State or Federal Law, City Ordinance or collective bargaining agreements. In others cases benefits are the result of programs sponsored by service organizations or employee organizations.

The Waltham Police Department feels that sworn and civilian members are entitled to support for stress related matters and believes that their family members should be assisted in matters relating to their death or serious injury.

Because of the variety and in many cases the complexity of these entitlements, the Waltham Police Department has established an Employee Support Services Unit. It is the policy of this Unit to work in conjunction with Police Administration, The Waltham Police Relief Association, or any other Department related organization, in providing services to its members and their families in obtaining the benefits that they have earned and are entitled to.

PROCEDURES:

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Employee Support Services Unit is as follows;
 - A. Provide members with information regarding benefits they are entitled to while serving as active members of the department.
 - B. Provide members with information regarding retirement or disability.
 - C. Provide support for officers regarding stress related matters.
 - D. Provide support and information to the families of deceased or injured members.
2. **ORGANIZATION:** The Chief of Police shall designate a member of no lesser rank than sergeant as Officer in Charge of the unit. The department stress officer(s) shall also be members of the unit. Other members may be assigned as needed. Members of the unit are to gain as much expertise concerning the availability and application for available benefits as possible. They shall identify and establish contacts with individuals offering assistance in these matters and shall call on these resources as needed.

In addition, members of the unit shall establish liaison with department organizations such as collective bargaining units and the Waltham Police Association in order to better serve the membership.

3. **FUNCTION OF UNIT:**

- A. Compile and maintain information regarding employee benefits.
- B. Advise employees upon request regarding employee benefits.
- C. Initiate the dissemination of related information as deemed appropriate.
- D. Assist officers by arranging for the provision of stress counseling, and psychological counseling when requested, either internally or through outside resources **[22.2.6d]**.
- E. Assist the families of deceased or injured members, by lending the support and sympathy of the department in time of need, and by ensuring that they obtain all benefits they are entitled to, internally or through outside resources **[22.2.6d]**.

4. **BENEFITS / ACTIVE MEMBERS:** The Employee Support Services Unit will provide information to members including but not limited to the following;

- A. City sponsored health insurance programs.
- B. City sponsored life insurance programs.
- C. Deferred compensation program.
- D. Direct deposit program.
- E. Salary and benefits mandated by contract.
- F. Police association benefits.
- G. Benefits offered by private organizations.
- H. Stress program.

5. **BENEFITS/MEMBERS PLANNING RETIREMENT:** The unit will provide information to members who are planning or contemplating retirement. Such information may include but is not limited to.

- A. Information concerning the different retirement plans.
- B. Information related to disability pensions.
- C. Information regarding the Waltham Police Association benefits

6. **STRESS RELATED MATTERS:** The Department shall designate and arrange for the training of no less than one officer as the department's stress officer. This officer shall by virtue of his position be a member of the unit. The stress officer shall make himself available to assist members in dealing with stress and emotional related matters.

- A. The stress officer shall advise and assist members in need of his services.
- B. He shall be knowledgeable about the availability of support groups and shall recommend them as appropriate.

- C. He shall assist members in arranging for psychological counseling when requested.
- D. Members of the department are eligible for voluntary, confidential psychological treatment. No department records will be maintained regarding any such treatment nor will any disciplinary action result from a member seeking such voluntary treatment. The existence of such treatment shall be a matter of the strictest confidence. The doctor/patient privilege of confidentiality shall be totally honored. **[22.2.6c]**
- E. The stress officer shall keep in strictest confidence all information that comes to his attention as a result of his position. **[22.2.6c]**
- F. Stress Officers shall be notified in the event of a critical incident and-(i.e. sudden deaths of children, homicides, motor vehicle fatalities, etc.). In the event of a critical incident, The Greater Boston Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM) shall be notified. This is done by advising the OIC of the Waltham Stress unit who shall notify the CISM. **[22.2.6e]** Critical Incident CISM protocol is in WPD Share/Stress Unit.
- G. There may be instances when referral to the stress unit may be mandatory. These instances may include but are not limited to Officer involved death/traumatic injury (reference Chapter 1B), as a result of a disciplinary measure/agreement, when a supervisor or Stress Unit official feels that officer may be a danger to himself or someone else, and any other unforeseen instance. **[22.2.6e]** If one of these instances is a critical incident, the OIC of the stress unit shall be notified and will activate the protocol for Greater Boston Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM).
- H. Supervisors who feel an individual is in need of service or have been approached by an individual requesting services, should immediately page or phone the OIC of the Employee Support Services Unit or a designee of the ESS Unit in the event the OIC of the Unit is unavailable. **[22.2.6e]** **A list of Stress Officers and phone numbers are listed in the QED computer program and in the WPD Emergency Special Operations Manual.**
- I. The City of Waltham has an Employee Support Service Unit available to all City of Waltham Employees. This is separate from the Waltham Police Department Employee Support Services Unit. If an employee wishes to activate this service, he/she should contact the City of Waltham Personnel Director who will arrange for service. **City of Waltham Personnel Department phone # is (781) 314-3360.**

All Phone numbers pertaining to the ESS, including the Waltham Police Chaplain are posted in a conspicuous spot in the Guardroom.

- J. Police Officers are two to three times more likely to die from suicide than from line of duty death. According to the National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation this has a lot to do with the high stress of policing, along with a lack of awareness and prevention education. The mission of the foundation is to help save the lives of police officers at risk through training programs and support services. The National P.O.L.I.C.E. Suicide Foundation website (<http://www.psf.org/>) has great resources. The Foundation also has a 24 hour hotline for officers in distress (1-866-276-4615).
7. **SUPPORT TO FAMILIES OF DECEASED MEMBERS:** In an effort to assist the families of deceased members to the fullest extent possible, the total resources of the unit shall be made available in this time of need. Members of the unit shall make every effort to provide both emotional and financial support.

- A. Emotional support available may include but is not limited to:
1. Assisting in the planning and arranging of funerals as requested.
 2. The provision of stress counseling
 3. The arranging of religious support
- B. Financial support shall involve assisting the family in identifying and obtaining all entitlements available including but not limited to:
1. Insurance benefits
 2. Association benefits
 3. Veterans benefits
 4. Social security benefits
 5. Pension benefits

8. **LINE OF DUTY DEATH POLICY OR SERIOUS BODILY INJURY:** The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures that will ensure the proper notification, support, and emotional care for all employees and volunteers or any members functioning as such, following a line of duty death or serious bodily injury.

It is the policy of the Waltham Police Department to provide liaison assistance to the immediate survivors of any member who dies in the line of duty or who has suffered a serious bodily injury. This assistance will be provided whether the death was unlawful (i.e. result of assault and battery) or accidental (i.e. result of motor vehicle accident) while member officer was performing a police related function, either on or off duty and while the member was an active member of the department. The Chief of Police may institute certain parts of this policy for cases of an officer's natural death.

Coordination of events following the line of duty death of a sworn, civilian, or auxiliary is an extremely important and complex responsibility. Professionalism and compassion must be exhibited at all times as an obligation to the family survivors and to the law enforcement community. In order to provide the best possible services and support for the officer's family, specific tasks will be assigned to select members of the department. The officers should be members of the Employee Support Services Unit if time permits and a list of those officers should be maintained in Operations. Their titles are:

- Notification Officer (assigned by OIC from Employee Support Services at time of incident)
- Hospital Liaison Officer (assigned by OIC from Employee Support Services at time of incident)
- Family Liaison Officer (assigned on case by case basis)
- Department Liaison Officer (pre-assigned through Personnel Order)
- Benefits Coordinator (pre-assigned through Personnel Order)

An explanation of these responsibilities is contained in this policy. An officer may be called upon to perform more than one role.

A. **PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - NOTIFICATION**

1. It shall be the responsibility of the shift OIC to properly notify the next of kin of an employee who has suffered severe injuries or has died. The shift OIC may personally make the notification or designate a *Notification Officer* to inform the survivors. An Emergency Contact form of all officers shall be maintained in Operations.

2. The department must never release the name of the deceased officer before the immediate family is notified. All efforts must be made to conceal the officers' identity before notifying the media (i.e.: conceal cruiser number if motor vehicle accident).
3. If there is knowledge of a medical problem with an immediate survivor, medical personnel should be available at the place of notification to coincide with the death notification.
4. Notification must always be made in person and never alone. The Chief of Police or a representative, police chaplain, close friend, or another police survivor could appropriately accompany the *Notification Officer*. However, if the aforementioned persons are not readily accessible, notification should not be delayed until these people can gather. If there is an opportunity to get to the hospital prior to the demise of the officer, don't wait for the delegation to gather. The family should learn of the death from the department first and not from the press or any other sources.
5. Never make a death notification on the doorstep. Ask to be admitted into the house. Inform family members slowly and clearly of the information that you have. If specifics of the incident are known, the *Notification Officer* should relay as much information as possible to the family. Be sure to use the officer's name during the notification.
6. If the officer has died, relay that information. Use words such as "died" and "dead" rather than "gone away" or "passed away".
7. If the family requests to visit the hospital, they should be transported by police cruiser. It is highly recommended that the family not drive themselves to the hospital. If the family insists on driving, an officer should accompany them.
8. If young children are at home, the *Notification Officer* shall attempt to arrange for babysitting needs. This may involve co-workers' spouses, transportation of children to a relative's home, or a similar arrangement.
9. Prior to departing for the hospital, the *Notification Officer* should notify the hospital staff and the *Hospital Liaison Officer*, by telephone if possible, that family member(s) are en route.
10. The deceased or severely injured officer's parents should also be afforded the courtesy of a personal notification if possible, and transportation as necessary.
11. If immediate survivors live outside of Waltham, the *Notification Officer* will ensure that Police Operations contacts the appropriate police agency requesting a personal notification. It is the discretion of the OIC to determine if notification is to be made by the Waltham Police if the deceased or injured officer resides in the surrounding area.
12. The Chief of Police or a high-ranking representative should respond to the residence or the hospital to meet with the family, as quickly as possible.
13. In the event of an on duty death, the external monitoring of police frequencies may be extensive. Communications regarding notifications should be restricted to the

telephone whenever possible. If the media has somehow obtained the officer's name, they should be advised to withhold the information, pending notification of next of kin.

B. ASSISTANCE FOR AFFECTED OFFICERS

1. Officers who were on the scene or who arrived moments after an officer was critically injured or killed should be relieved as quickly as possible.
2. Police witnesses and other officers who may have been emotionally affected by the serious injury or death of another officer will attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

C. ASSISTING THE FAMILY AT THE HOSPITAL

1. The shift OIC shall be responsible for assigning an officer as a *Hospital Liaison Officer*. The *Hospital Liaison Officer* is responsible for coordinating the activities of hospital personnel, the officer's family, police officers, and others.

These responsibilities include:

- a. Arrange with hospital personnel to provide an appropriate waiting facility for the family, the Chief of Police, the *Notification Officer*, and only those others requested by the immediate survivors.
 - b. Arrange a separate area for fellow police officers and friends to assemble.
 - c. Establish a press staging area for the press officer.
 - d. Ensure that medical personnel relay pertinent information regarding the officer's condition to the family on a timely basis and before such information is released to others.
 - e. Notify the appropriate hospital personnel that all medical bills relating to the injured or deceased officer be directed to the Assignments Officer. The family should not receive any of these bills at their residence. This may require the *Hospital Liaison Officer* to re-contact the hospital during normal business hours to ensure that proper billing takes place.
 - f. The *Notification Officer* should ensure that the family is updated regarding the incident and the officer's condition upon their arrival at the hospital.
 - g. The *Notification Officer* should arrange transportation for the family back to their residence.
2. If it is possible for the family to visit the injured officer or employee before death, they should be afforded that opportunity. A police official should "prepare" the family for what they might see in the emergency room and should accompany the family into the room for the visit if the family requests it. The family should be advised of visitation policies and, in the event of death, explain why an autopsy is necessary.

3. The *Notification Officer* should remain at the hospital while the family is present.
4. Do not be overly protective of the family. This includes the sharing of specific information on how the officer was killed, as well as allowing the family time with the deceased officer.

D. SUPPORT OF THE FAMILY DURING THE WAKE AND FUNERAL

1. The Chief of Police, or a designee, will meet with the family at their home to determine their wishes regarding departmental participation in the preparation of the funeral or services. All possible assistance will be rendered.
2. With the approval of the family, the Chief will assign a *Family Liaison Officer*. The Chief will also designate a *Department Liaison Officer* and a *Benefits Coordinator*.

E. FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER

1. The selection of a *Family Liaison Officer* is a critical assignment. An attempt should be made to assign someone who enjoyed a close relationship with the officer and his family.
2. This is not a decision making position. This is a role of “facilitator” between the family and the Police Department.
3. Responsibilities of the *Family Liaison Officer*:
 - a. Ensure that the needs of the family come before the wishes of the department.
 - b. Assist the family with funeral arrangements and make them aware of what the department can offer if they decide to have a police funeral. If they choose a police funeral, brief the family on funeral procedure (i.e., presenting the flag, playing of taps).
 - c. Apprise the family of information concerning the death and the continuing investigation.
 - d. Provide as much assistance as possible, including overseeing of arrangements for out of town family members (i.e., food, lodging, transportation, child care).
 - e. Notify Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) National Office 573 346-4911, MA Chapter 781 376-9966. Members are available to provide emotional support to surviving families.

F. DEPARTMENT LIAISON OFFICER

1. This position will be assigned to the OIC Employee Support Services because of the need to effectively coordinate resources throughout the department.
2. *Department Liaison Officer* responsibilities:

- a.** Work closely with the *Family Liaison Officer* to ensure that the needs of the family are fulfilled.
- b.** Handle the news media throughout the ordeal. If the family decides to accept an interview, the *Department Liaison Officer* should attend to “screen” questions presented to the family so as not to jeopardize subsequent legal proceedings.
- c.** Meet with the following persons to coordinate funeral activities and establish an itinerary:
 - 1.** Chief of Police and Division Commanders;
 - 2.** Funeral Director;
 - 3.** Family priest or minister;
 - 4.** Cemetery Director, and
 - 5.** Honor Guard.
- d.** Direct the funeral activities of the department and visiting Police Departments according to the wishes of the family.
- e.** Issue a CJIS administrative message to include the following:
 - 1.** Name of officer;
 - 2.** Date and time of death
 - 3.** Circumstances surrounding the death;
 - 4.** Funeral arrangements (private service or police funeral);
 - 5.** Uniform to be worn;
 - 6.** Expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers; and
 - 7.** Contact person and phone number for visiting departments to indicate their desire to attend and obtain further information.
- f.** Obtain an American flag. If the family wishes a flag presentation by the Chief, notify the Chief’s Office.
- g.** If the family desires a burial in uniform, obtain a uniform and all accoutrements (except weapons) and deliver them to the funeral home.
- h.** Assign officers for usher duty at the church.
- i.** Arrange for the delivery of the officer’s personal belongings to the family.
- j.** Brief the Chief and Division Commanders concerning all funeral arrangements.
- k.** Ensure that the surviving parents are afforded recognition and that proper placement is arranged for them during the funeral and procession.
- l.** Arrange for stand-by medical personnel for the family, if necessary.
- m.** Coordinate traffic management, with other jurisdictions if necessary, during the viewing, funeral, and procession.

- n.** Assign an officer to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral.
- o.** Maintain a roster of all Departments sending personnel to the funeral, including:
 - 1.** Name and address of responding agency;
 - 2.** Name of the Chief of Police;
 - 3.** Number of officers responding;
 - 4.** Number of officers attending the reception after the funeral;
 - 5.** Number of vehicles.
- p.** Arrange for routine residence checks by the Patrol Division, on a case-by-case basis, of the survivor's home for 6-8 weeks following the funeral.

G. BENEFITS COORDINATOR

- 1.** The *Benefits Coordinator* shall gather information on all benefits/funeral payments available to the family. The *Benefits Coordinator* is responsible for filing the appropriate benefit paperwork and following through with the family to ensure that these benefits are being received.
- 2.** The *Benefits Coordinator* is responsible for:
 - a.** Filing Line of Duty Death claims and related paperwork.
 - b.** Contacting the appropriate offices without delay to ensure that the beneficiary receives death and retirement benefits, the officer's remaining paychecks and payment for remaining annual and compensatory time.
 - c.** Gathering information on all benefit/funeral payments that are available to the family.
 - d.** Assist in setting up any special trust funds or educational funds.
 - e.** Notify other social and fraternal organizations of the death and to ensure that any and all entitlements are paid to the beneficiary.
 - f.** Preparing a printout of the various benefits/funeral payments that are due to the family, listing named beneficiaries, contacts at various benefits offices, and when they can expect to receive payment.
 - g.** Meeting with the surviving family a few days after the funeral to discuss the benefits they will receive. A copy of the prepared printout and any other related paperwork should be given to the family at this time.
 - h.** Meeting again with the family in about three months and as often as necessary to make sure that they are receiving the benefits.

3. If there are surviving children from a previous marriage, the guardian of those children should also receive a printout of what benefits the child(ren) may be receiving.

H. CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY

1. The *Family Liaison Officer* acts as a long-term liaison with the surviving family who ensures that close contact is maintained between the department and the survivors.
2. If no court proceedings surround the circumstances of the officer's death, the *Family Liaison Officer* will relay all details of the incident to the family at the earliest opportunity.
3. If criminal violations surround the death, the *Family Liaison Officer* will:
 - a. Inform the family of all new developments prior to press release;
 - b. Keep the family apprised of legal and parole proceedings;
 - c. Introduce the family to Victim Advocates;
 - d. Accompany the family at trial, if requested;
 - e. Arrange for investigators to meet with the family at the earliest opportunity following the trial to answer all their questions.